# BIRCA ANNUAL REPORT 2026

2026 has been both a concluding and a developing year for BIRCA; we have completed our large Island Connect project and embarked on new thematic paths through a focus on rituals in the performing arts and the geopolitical situation around us. We have received a two-year grant of DKK 400,000 per year from the Danish Arts Foundation under the title **Laboratory and archiving within new ecological performing arts** (Laboratorium og arkivering indenfor ny økologisk scenekunst). We held **BIRCA Kids** for the seventh year in a row, this year with only 1 week with Norwegian artists in order to see how the Nordic perspective can be included. **BIRCA Ritual** started our new research on the use of rituals in the performing arts, with the participation of 6 Nordic women, and it brought many new perspectives. **BIRCA Outreach** gathered various artists who work with geopolitical issues. We began the third and final year of our grant from Creative Europe for the Island Connect project, based on a network of 7 European island partners in total plus a number of pop-up partners. We ran the established **Artistic Residency** format and the developing **Islander Focus** at BIRCA, and sent an artist to the **Co-creation** format in Tenerife. We have also received support from Bornholm Regional Municipality and Sparekassen Bornholm. In total we have had 11 weeks of supported residencies at BIRCA and took part in two pop-up island residencies in Gotland and Martinique. Finally, as usual, we had a programme during the Bornholm Culture Week this year with 2 different performances – and worked towards a project with a Ukrainian artist, which unfortunately was cancelled.

In total, 31 performing artists (of whom 9 Danish) and 5 children stayed at BIRCA in 2026. We held 4 showings at BIRCA with 81 audience members in the residency programme, plus a showing during Culture Week for 22 at BIRCA, and the project **Hope and Ponies** at Hodda in Rønne, which more than 2,000 people experienced, while 4 new banner works about hope were created. Once again this year we have seen a diverse representation of artists, including children, older people and gender diversity, and we have again experienced great diversity in fields of work and methods. We have increased our focus on curation and the development of themed residencies, inspired by and in collaboration with some of the Danish artists who are closest to us. We have partly invited these artists in as consultants on the individual residencies, and partly given them space for development.

We have continued the ecological perspective and our focus on archiving as part of our practice. We remain mindful of our CO2 footprint.

And this year, 3 kittens moved in at BIRCA.



**BIRCA Ritual 15 – 28 June**

Participating artists
Alaya Riefenstahl/DK – co-curator
Camilla Brogaard/DK + Germany
Varste Mathæussen/GL & AX
Thoranna Björnsdottir/IS
Christine Gaski/DK & N
Liene Jurgesen/DK & LT

Ritual was magic in the middle of summer. We met and explored the island of Bornholm and its magical places, stones and chakra systems. We exchanged experiences of using rituals in the performing arts, through physical experiments, everyday rituals and philosophical debates in which we tried to pin down what rituals actually are. We drew on experiences from Sámi and Inuit traditions, were visited by Monna Dithmer to get an academic perspective on rituals, and met with Bodil Egeberg to work with energy. The residency gave many inputs for the individual artists' future work on the theme of rituals, but also for BIRCA in a broader Nordic perspective.

*Qarrtsiluni – while waiting for something to burst*

We had both an open outdoor gathering at Hammerknuden on Midsummer Night, attended by 10, and a showing at BIRCA on 27 June at 4 pm with 20 attendees.



**BIRCA Outreach 31 August – 13 September plus May**

Participating artists:
Kristian Husted
Daniel Norback
Helene Kvint – only took part for one week before she had to go home, and did not do a showing.
Katherina Radeva and Alister Lownie from Two Destination Language, based in Scotland
Daria Pugashova/Ukraine was supposed to have taken part and was here for a residency in May.

In May, Daria and Kristian came and began their development work, each on their own but also together, in an exploration of the aftermath of the Cold War and how we relate to the current geopolitical situation. We visited Cold War museums, bunkers, granite quarries and the theatre, and connected with young Ukrainian refugees with developmental disabilities. Daria developed a very fine project for showing during Culture Week, but found herself forced to cancel.

In September, Kristian came back, this time to work together with Daniel on their project **Østersøen mit øje** (The Baltic Sea My Eye), about how people relate to the threat of war and which prepping strategies they have. At the same time, Helene Kvint took part and worked on her upcoming projects about Europe's right-wing women, and took us to local folk dance. In parallel, Kat and Alister worked at Hodda in Rønne on their workshop project **Hope & Ponies**, where locals could talk about their hopes in the midst of times of crisis and take part in creating the 4 new Bornholm banners in total that are now part of the exhibition.

Showing of Kristian and Daniel's joint project Østersøen Mit Øje on 12 September at 4 pm with 22 attendees during Culture Week. Kat and Alister/Two Destination Language held a reception on 12 September at 2 pm at Hodda, where 20 people attended – in total approx. 2,200 people had taken part.






**ISLAND CONNECT**

This year we had 2 Island Connect residencies at BIRCA, and we also facilitated one in Gotland and contributed one participant to the joint Co-creation residency. This was the last year of our funding round from Creative Europe. Partners in addition to BIRCA are: Domino/Croatia, CINE/Mallorca, IACC/Ireland, LAV/Tenerife, Sardinia Teatro/Sardinia and Theatre Alibi/Corsica. In addition to creating workspace for performing artists, the project focuses on the qualities of island culture through studies of island identity. In April, all selected artists took part in a joint Spring Lab in Corsica with all selected Island Connect artists as well as partners, where they were introduced to the local artists from the island and got to debate island culture while forming networks in all directions. As a conclusion to the project, all partners met in Sardinia, where a number of works by the participating artists were shown, and one could see the perspective of the study we have been part of over the past three years.

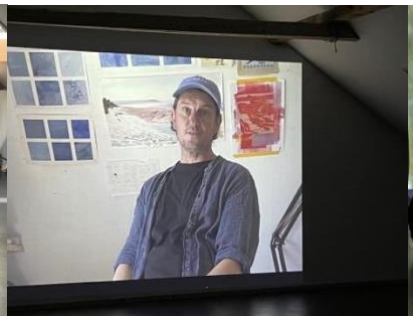
Artists sent out from BIRCA
**Lenka Vorechovská** – Co-creation in Tenerife in June
**Cathrin Elenor Nørgaard** – Islander Focus in Mallorca in April and Martinique in September

**Artistic Residency at BIRCA 11 – 24 May**
Simone Azzu and Filippo Lacana from Sardinia
Flora Pesenti from Corsica (extra Islander Focus)
Elise Bjerkelund Reine with partial participation of Noora Hannula – Elise was subsequently in Sardinia in September, with the participation of Fernanda Aleman and Kitt Johnson

Elise worked together with Noora on developing her project **Horse**, which explores cyborgs and their movement patterns. Simone worked with music, and after Filippo's arrival they went deeper into the study of local songs and traditions from Sardinia. Flora conducted a series of interviews with people about what it is like to live on an island and which hardships and inspiration it gives them – among others, she interviewed Ben Woodhams. There was also time for trips around the island and visits to the Frø collective.

Showing on 23 May at 4 pm with 34 attendees
Showing in Sardinia on 26 September with 200+ attendees




**Islander Focus 3 – 16 August**

Participating artists
Amano de Londra Miura/IR
Alexandra Deglise/ Martinique/F
Cathrin Elenor Nørgaard/DK

Islander Focus was a very beautiful meeting between Irish Amano, Bornholm-based Cathrin and Alexandra from Martinique. Together it became a sensory journey into the Bornholm landscape and especially the water, which Alexandra collected from the polluted sea and made a beautiful healing process with, in honour of Mother Water. We celebrated the solar eclipse on the beach, and we visited the Frø collective and shared songs. Amano set up “sensing” chairs around BIRCA and visited them every day.

*On the threshold of the harvest*
*In the shadow of the eclipse sun*
*Under the wings of a hundred swallows*
*I sat down and I begun*
*To dry the earth’s gifts for 3 sisters*
*To bake them bread and hear their tears*
*To sense, bonedeep, eyes closed and open*
*That trust and love have happened here*
Amano

Showing on 16 August at 3 pm with 27 people







**Islander Focus 7 – 15 April in Gotland**

Together with DACE from Sweden – Rebecca Chentinell and Rickard Borgström – we facilitated an Islander Focus residency in Gotland, in which Susanne Danig also took part.

Participants in addition to Rebecca, Rickard and their 2 children:
Daniel Norback (who also lent the house)
Peter Vadim
Monna Dithmer

During the residency we stayed in Daniel's old family house, Bara Myr, in the south of the island. We travelled around most of the island – to the tip of Fårö with the Bergman museum, to Hoburgen on the southern tip, a tour of Visby and a cultural walk in Slite. We saw fantastic rauks (sea stacks) around the island, saw the Bildsten (picture stones) at the museum, and encountered stone settings at Trullhalsar burial ground and Tjälder hill fort. All of it was a great inspiration for the continued development around stone on Bornholm. Peter held a small internal workshop as a conclusion.





**BIRCA KIDS RESIDENCY 6 – 12 July**

We held only 1 week with BIRCA Kids this year, but expanded the focus to the Nordic region and invited two Norwegian families.

Participating families
Katarina Skår Lisa with husband Diego Belda and the children Luna 13 and Eliana 4
Astrid Groseth with husband Øivind Brodal Syversen and the children Sverre Johan 12, Maud 9 and Olav 4

The two Norwegian families were curated together for BIRCA Kids and both worked with dance and natural elements, and therefore took part in a joint exploratory project in which everyone's premises were accommodated. There was room for play and beach visits. They started with a guided tour to visit trees and nature at BIRCA, during which they collected objects for a shared nature altar/mandala. It was created together and expanded over the course of the week as new objects were found at BIRCA or on visits around the island. The mandala was truly inclusive to work with for all ages.







## THE CIRCULAR PERFORMANCE ARCHIVE

We have continued working with the Circular Performance Archive (CPA), where knowledge created in artistic research processes at BIRCA is collected. One aim of the archive is to make this knowledge visible, share it and put it into play in new ways, which we have really been able to set in motion this year by encouraging the artists to use the archive as inspiration. Through the archive, which can be accessed online here, you can gain in-depth knowledge of all the artists who have been at BIRCA this year. There are interviews with all artists and insight into themes, considerations and insights from the processes. In this way the archive is an important supplement to this annual report. We hope that the work done at BIRCA thereby gives greater resonance and more visible points of connection between artists and topics.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Since 2022 we have taken a broader look at BIRCA's CO2 and environmental footprint. After the Danish Arts Agency closed its calculator, we have not made concrete calculations of our CO2 footprint. We know that we use just under 2 tonnes of CO2 to run the house from May to October. Here we optimise with a heat pump system and good waste sorting. We eat mainly vegan food and buy local produce – especially from the local regenerative farm Hammersly. We also know that CO2 is used on driving around the island with artists, and that there is a footprint from our audience, as BIRCA is hard to get to and from without a car, but we do not have the right tools or the time to measure the concrete footprint.

We know that by far the most significant part of our footprint comes from the artists' travel. We therefore support artists travelling by train/bus/ferry – it sometimes requires increased expenses and time. The CO2 footprint of ferries is also large, but unavoidable when you are on an island. It is unavoidable that the greater the level of activity BIRCA has, and the more international it is, the higher our CO2 footprint.

It is important to us that our forest, which is left completely untouched, absorbs approx. 10 tonnes of CO2 annually, and that
BIRCA's land gives room for lots of animals, birds and insects to thrive. Everyone who comes here enjoys meeting butterflies, as well as seeing birds of prey and fallow deer. We give room to the trees and all the living growth that thrives here.

## OVERALL FIGURES AND DATA

In total, 31 adult performing artists with 5 children used BIRCA professionally in 2026. We have by far the most female artists, namely 21, only 7 men and 3 who identify as queer. One third are Danes (9); the remaining 22 have a broad international background, and they came from the following countries: Greenland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, France (Martinique and Corsica), Spain, Italy (Sardinia), Ireland, Scotland, Bulgaria, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Ukraine.

In the residency programme we held 4 showings (plus an internal showing for BIRCA Kids) during the season, with approx. 81 guests. In addition, during Bornholm Culture Week we had a showing for 22 at BIRCA, as well as the project Hope and Ponies at Hodda in Rønne, which more than 2,000 people experienced, while 4 new banner works about hope were created.

We have not been quite as active in terms of press this year, so there have only been a few mentions in Bornholms Tidende, and Denne Uges Bornholm mainly has a mention in the calendar. Klyngeavisen is fortunately good at writing about us. We have sent out newsletters regularly and been active on Facebook, where we have approx. 1,700 followers.

The association BIRCA Residency is led by a board consisting of **Ida Marie Tjalve** (chair), **Bente Larsen** (vice chair), **Tine Nygaard, Peter Vadim** and **Jens Frimann Hansen**. **Susanne Danig** has been appointed to lead the association's daily operations and is paid in accordance with the activities that are held.

